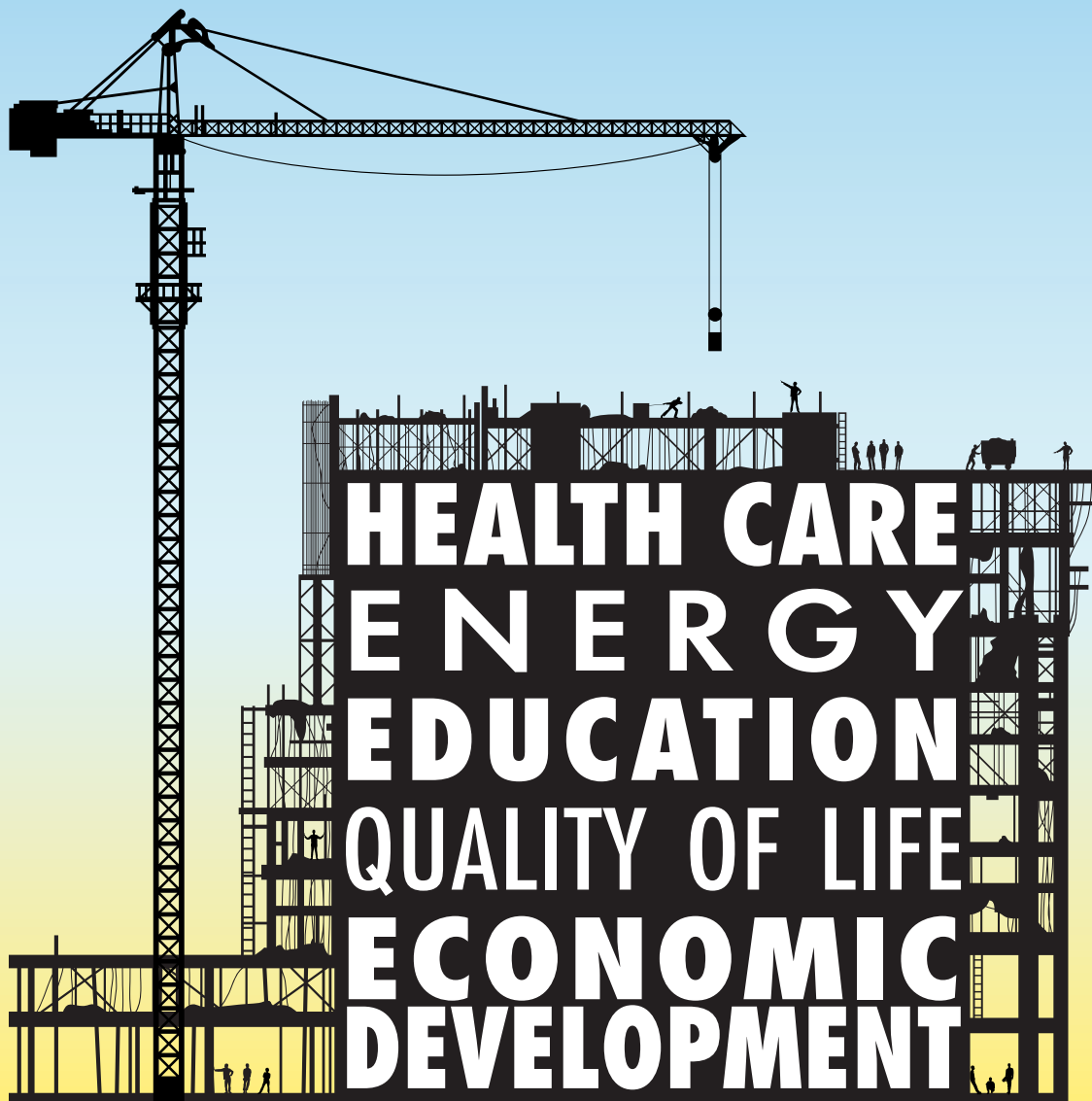


# **SENATE DEMOCRATS 2007 LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

## **BUILDING TOWARD A BETTER FUTURE**



# Senate Democrats' ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2007

## HEALTH CARE

### HealthFirst CT and Healthy Kids Initiatives

- ◆ Makes several improvements to our current health care system in an effort to expand access to quality, affordable health care. These improvements include:
  - ❖ Expansion of public programs, like HUSKY, to more children and adults and the establishment of a broad outreach program to get all eligible individuals enrolled
  - ❖ State commitments to public health data collection and secure electronic health records to address the health of our communities, reduce duplication in testing, reduce errors, improve quality and lower costs
  - ❖ Needed funding for community-based care, including school-based health centers and federally qualified health centers, and for transportation to and from medical appointments
  - ❖ Rate increases for health care providers through the Medicaid program
  - ❖ Increased options for health care for young adults and small employers
  - ❖ Two authorities established to move the state toward universal health care for all residents

### Compassionate Care for Victims of Sexual Assault

- ◆ Requires all CT hospitals to offer emergency contraception (Plan B) for victims of sexual assault
- ◆ Hospitals with philosophical objections to the Plan B pill can contract out for these services

### Palliative Use of Marijuana

- ◆ Allows medical use of marijuana by a patient, if certified by a physician that the patient will benefit from its use
- ◆ Allows a patient or a primary caregiver to grow marijuana for patient's use
- ◆ Prohibits anyone convicted of marijuana possession or drug dealing from being the primary caregiver/grower

## ENERGY

### Electricity and Energy Efficiency

- ◆ Expands green building requirements for state facilities and school construction projects and provides increased funding for projects
- ◆ Requires the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) to develop a plan to improve energy management in state facilities
- ◆ Extends and expands sales tax exemptions for energy efficiency products
- ◆ Expands funding for distributed-generation projects, such as micro-turbines and fuel cells
- ◆ Increases the proportion of the state's power requirements that must come from renewable resources
- ◆ Requires electric companies to develop a plan to deploy advanced meters. Meters will be available to customers who request one by January 1, 2009
- ◆ Requires electric companies to provide information about competitive suppliers when a customer begins new service or inquires about rates or conservation programs
- ◆ Requires the DEP to auction allowances under the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative and use the proceeds to fund conservation and other programs that benefit ratepayers
- ◆ Establishes a comprehensive, statewide energy outreach and marketing program to educate consumers on the benefits of energy-efficiency technology

# Senate Democrats' ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2007

## EDUCATION

### S.A.F.E. Schools

- ◆ Designed to improve safety and security at Connecticut's public schools, the S.A.F.E. (Security Assistance For Education) program helps schools assess their security, provide security infrastructure improvements, and ensure that school personnel receive appropriate training.
- ◆ Also addressed current levels of emergency responses at colleges and universities by requiring institutions of higher education in Connecticut to have crisis plans in place and include in them strategies for notifying campus students, employees, and visitors of a crisis.

### Access to Postsecondary Education

- ◆ Extends in-state tuition rates to undocumented immigrants as long as they completed at least four years of, and graduated from, high school in Connecticut and have been accepted as a student at a state public university or college.

### Democracy in Elementary Schools

- ◆ Requires elementary schools to provide students with opportunities to participate in democracy, in addition to standard instruction

### Restraints and Seclusion in Public Schools

- ◆ Regulates the use of physical restraints and seclusions on special education students in public schools, requires parental notification of such policies, and requires schools to report the use of such seclusions and restraints

## ENVIRONMENT

### The Face of Connecticut

- ◆ Increases cap limit for grant funding to municipalities under the Open Space and Watershed Acquisition Grant Program
- ◆ Requires the Department of Agriculture to administer a program that provides eligible municipalities with loans to purchase agricultural land. The bill provides that municipalities are eligible for the loan if they provide at least 20% of the purchase price for the land

### Pesticide Use on School Grounds

- ◆ Expands a ban on applying lawn care pesticides to school playing fields and playgrounds to schools with students through grade eight
- ◆ Expands a school superintendent's ability to authorize emergency applications of lawn care pesticides in health emergencies to any public school
- ◆ Makes the Department of Environmental Protection responsible for administering and enforcing school pesticide applications

### Use of Cleaning Products in State and Municipal Buildings and Schools

- ◆ Bans the use of cleaning products that do not meet certain guidelines or environmental standards to clean inside state-owned buildings beginning October 1, 2007

### Collection and Recycling of Covered Electronic Devices

- ◆ Creates a mandatory recycling program for discarded computers and televisions
- ◆ Manufacturers must participate in a program to implement and finance the collection, transportation, and recycling of these products

# Senate Democrats' ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2007

## **Farmland Preservation Advisory Board, a State Building Code for Agriculture, and Zoning Regulation of Farming**

- ♦ Creates a 12-member Farmland Preservation Advisory Board to help the Agriculture Department with its purchase of a development rights program and other efforts to preserve agricultural lands
- ♦ Requires the State Bond Commission to vote on whether to authorize, at certain times and when available, the issuance of bonds that the legislature approved for agricultural land preservation programs but which the commission has not allocated

## **QUALITY OF LIFE & PUBLIC SAFETY**

### **Emergency Plans of Operations of Shoreline Communities and the Designation of Liquefied Natural Gas Hazard and Security Zones**

- ♦ Requires shoreline communities to develop emergency plans with relation to existing liquefied natural gas terminals
- ♦ Also requires attorney general to recommend a hazard zone around such facilities to the Coast Guard, the establishment of a security zone around such facilities, and the prohibition of the use of security forces in our waters without the permission of the State of Connecticut

### **Evacuation of Pets and Service Animals and Approval of the Local Emergency Plan of Operations**

- ♦ Adds pets and service animals to the list of mandatory evacuees that must be in the state emergency plan

### **Family and Medical Leave for Municipal Employees**

- ♦ Requires that employees of municipalities of the state receive the same family and medical leave benefits as state employees after 12 months of employment. This extends benefits to parties of a civil union (because they are not given this benefit under federal Family Medical Leave Act law)

### **Jessica's Law**

- ♦ Increases the penalties for sexual assault of a minor, including minimum mandatory sentence of 25-50 years for the new "aggravated sexual assault of a minor" charge, and minimum sentences for enticing someone under 13 or the possession of pornography of someone under 13
- ♦ Bill also decriminalizes consensual sex between minors within 3 years of age of each other (instead of 2)

### **Lost and Stolen Firearms**

- ♦ Requires the reporting of a lost or stolen gun within 72 hours of when the owner should have known it was gone. The first offense is an infraction, the second is a Class D felony or Class C felony if intentional

### **Disruptions of a Funeral**

- ♦ Prohibits the disruption of a funeral from 60 minutes before to 60 minutes after a funeral. No one can come within 300 feet of the boundary of a funeral and impede access to the funeral, or make a disruption on the grounds or within 150 feet of the grounds. Violators will be guilty of a Class A misdemeanor punishable by up to 1 year in jail or \$2,000 fine

### **Massage Therapy**

- ♦ Prohibits anyone other than licensed massage therapists from using that title or advertising massages
- ♦ Helps public safety authorities and the public distinguish between honest therapeutic salons and illegal businesses which act as fronts for crimes such as prostitution

# Senate Democrats' ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2007

## BUSINESS AND JOBS

### Economic Development and Job Creation

- ◆ Expanded technology assistance to more small and medium-sized manufacturing firms
- ◆ Expanded entrepreneurial assistance and extended the reach of the business enterprise program that provides incentives to companies to relocate or expand in Connecticut

### Historic Preservation and Community Housing

- ◆ Provides tax credits to developers to help them finance the restoration of our historic structures and include community housing in these redevelopments

### Clean Contracting

- ◆ To protect taxpayers and to ensure safety, we continue to fight for protections against the privatization of state functions. The recent debacle involving the construction of shoddy storm drains on I-84 and an inspections scandal underscore this concern. Although our efforts to institute protections against such abuses have been vetoed three times, we passed legislation this year to, again, establish standards for privatization that protect taxpayers
- ◆ Requires privatization proposals to receive a cost-benefit analysis in order to determine if privatizing a particular service will maintain the quality of services at a cost savings of at least 10%. Also provides incentives for state employees to improve services and reduce costs
- ◆ Establishes a State Contracting Standards Board to centralize oversight and review of contracting across state agencies. Gives the state more powers to cancel a contract if it involves corruption or conflicts of interests and to disqualify contractors who do not act in the best interest of the state
- ◆ Establishes a Vendor and Citizen Advisory Panel to make recommendations to the new State Contracting Standards Board regarding procurement and project management

### Notification to Injured Employees of the Discontinuation or Reduction of Workers' Compensation Benefits

- ◆ Extends from 10 to 15 days the period during which an employee can request a hearing after receiving notice of a workers' compensation benefit reduction or discontinuation
- ◆ Requires that certain additional information be included in the form (known as a "36") notifying an employee of the pending benefit reduction or discontinuation
- ◆ Increases from \$500 to \$1,000 the maximum penalty for an employer's or insurer's undue delay of a compensation payment due to such party's fault or neglect

## OTHER IMPORTANT BILLS

### Eminent Domain

- ◆ Makes significant changes to eminent domain laws by setting up limiting rules on when takings can occur, including a prohibition on takings for primarily increasing tax revenues. Takings must be complete in 10 years, and the property owner has the right of first refusal to buy property back if the property is not used for the intent of taking

### Adequate Funding of the Teachers' Retirement System

- ◆ Significantly increases contributions to the Teachers Retirement fund and guarantees that the state will adequately fund it for the foreseeable future